



Western Catholic Educational Association  
Catholic Schools Accrediting Commission

# IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING

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**A Self Study for:**

**Holy Spirit Catholic School – E848  
2825 Central Avenue  
Great Falls, MT 59401**

*Continuous School Improvement Focused On High Achievement of All Students*

**Fall, 2015**

**Preface**

Holy Spirit Catholic School has a long history of providing Catholic education in Great Falls. Through the years it has changed, adapted and continued to provide a strong faith-based, challenging academic environment to children even through the consolidation of schools and parishes. The parish school is looking toward the future and the possibility of becoming a part of a “Great Falls Catholic School System.” The self-study process has provided a solid understanding of the strengths and accomplishments of Holy Spirit Catholic School, as well as of the areas to work on to support improving student learning. The information gleaned through the study process will be very valuable as we move forward either as a separate parish school or as a combined Catholic school system.

There were many contributors to this self-study. Your dedication and many hours of work are greatly appreciated by the Holy Spirit School Community. Thanks to the teachers, staff, and advisory council who were the backbone to this study.

Thank you to our pastor, Father Dick Schlosser for his continued support of the school mission; and thanks to Father Dave Wilkins, our parents and community members who have not only contributed to this self-study, but have supported this school in so many ways.

Finally, a special thanks goes to Paige Nicholson who volunteered countless hours to coordinate this self-study process.



Principal | Holy Spirit Catholic School

## Holy Spirit Catholic School

### Mission -



With Jesus as the Master Teacher, Holy Spirit Catholic School develops in each child an active and creative mind, a sense of understanding Catholic values through compassion, respect and service to others, and the courage to act on those values.

**Vision –**

Together we pray, learn, act and serve.

**Philosophy -**

Holy Spirit Catholic School exists for the specific purpose of supporting parents in forming the minds and character of students in the spiritual and moral values of Jesus Christ according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. We believe that the image of God is present in students and staff. We believe every student is a capable and worthwhile individual. Therefore as we promote academic excellence, while fostering the total development of each student, we believe we must create an atmosphere of reflection, prayer, love, affirmation, responsibility and creativity for our staff and students while also serving our community.

**Beliefs -**

- Guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church, Holy Spirit is a faith-based school of academic excellence.
- We believe that all children, faculty, staff and parents are members of the Body of Christ and should be treated with dignity and respect.
- Understanding that parents are their children’s first teachers, Holy Spirit fosters a partnership with them to advance student success in school and throughout life.
- We work to provide the tools and resources to enable students to become independent, life-long learners, problem-solvers and responsible Christians.
- We further work to instill the importance of being compassionate stewards of God’s creation, and to live out the Gospel by serving others.
- Holy Spirit Catholic School staff and students build respectful relationships by modeling the behavior of Jesus Christ in a safe and nurturing learning environment.

**SLE’s (School wide Learning Expectations) -**

S – Serve others

O – Own your actions

A – Act with God

R – Respect the right to learn

*With the*

S – Stewards of God’s Creation

P – Problem Solvers

I – Independent, Life-long learners

R – Responsible Catholics

I – Inspirational Leaders

T – Trustworthy Citizens

**WCEA/HSCS Leadership Team**

Jim Wichman

Principal



Eric Bloomgren	School Advisory Board Chair/Parent
Helen Boysun	Administrative Assistant/Grandparent/Parent of Alumni
Laura O'Neill	Co-Chair: Catholic Identity & School Purpose/Art, Keyboarding & Religion Teacher
Char Moseman	Co-Chair Organization of Student Learning & Support for Student Spiritual, Personal & Academic Growth/Teacher: Literature & English/Parent of Alumnae
Mary Wingerter	Co-Chair for Data Analysis & Resource Management and Development/Development Director/Parent of Alumni
Christina Nunez	Co-Chair SLE's and Standards-Based Curriculum & Instructional Methodology/School Advisory Board Member/Parent
Kristine Young <sup>1</sup>	Organization of Student Learning & Support for Student Spiritual, Personal and Academic Growth/Fifth Grade Teacher
Paige Nicholson	WCEA Coordinator/School Advisory Board Member/Parent/Alumnus

## **WCEA Focus Groups**

### **Catholic Identity & School Purpose**

Mary (Mimi) Mathson	Co-Chair/Fourth Grade Teacher
Laura O'Neill	Co-Chair/Art, Keyboarding & Religion Teacher
Vonnie Smith	Writer/Second Grader Teacher
Vi Figarelle	Retired Librarian
Brenda Meyer	Extended Care Director
Mary Richards	Extended Care Staff
Father Dick Schlosser	Holy Spirit School & Parish Pastor
Marilyn Uptmor	Food Service Assistant
Brett Haverlandt	School Advisory Board Member/Parent
Jay Collins	School Advisory Board Member/Parent
Kyler Baker	Recent Alumnus

### **Organization of Student Learning & Support for Student Spiritual, Personal & Academic Growth**

Char Moseman	Co-Chair/Reading & Social Studies Teacher
Jason Holden	Co-Chair/School Advisory Board Member/Parent
Kristine Young <sup>1</sup>	Writer/Fifth Grade Teacher
Lou Ann Gay <sup>2</sup>	Media/Library
Kristin Jensen	Extended Care Provider
Karlene Schraner	Music Teacher/Band & Choir Director/Parent
Erin Voeller	Third Grade Teacher/Parent
Brian McKinney <sup>3</sup>	Food Service Director
Tony Longin	School Advisory Board Member/Parent

### **Data Analysis & Resource Management and Development**

Mary Wingerter	Co-Chair/Development Director/Holy Spirit Parish Council/Parent of Alumni/Alumnus
Kelby Donnelly	Co-Chair/School Advisory Board Member/Parent
Tammy Nathe	Writer/Former Administrative Assistant/Parent of Alumni
Ashley Byers <sup>1</sup>	Math & Science Teacher
Jim Wichman	Principal
Kevin Hieb	Janitor
Mark Meyer	Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Parish Administrator/Parent of Alumni
Ray Wrobel	Bus Driver
Eric Bloomgren	School Advisory Board Chairman/Parent
Tom Hayes	School Advisory Board Member/Parent

### **SLE's and Standards-Based Curriculum & Instructional Methodology**

Christina Nunez	Co-Chair/Writer/School Advisory Board Member/Parent
Toni Hendershot	Co-Chair/School Advisory Board Member/Parent
Brittany Baca <sup>4</sup>	Tiny Tots Teacher
Shani Baker	Teacher's Aide/Parent
Linda Erickson	Pre-Kindergarten Teacher/Alumnus/Parent
Karen Garrick <sup>2</sup>	English & Spanish Teacher
Alisa Hale <sup>2</sup>	First Grade Teacher/Parent of Alumni
Jennifer Henning <sup>4</sup>	Physical Education Teacher/Parent
Michele Jezewski	Extended Care Provider
Maghan Bryce <sup>4</sup>	Kindergarten Teacher
Jack Newman	School Advisory Board Member/Alumnus/Parent

<sup>1</sup> No longer employed at Holy Spirit Catholic School – Military related

<sup>2</sup> No longer employed at Holy Spirit Catholic School – Retirement

<sup>3</sup> No longer employed at Holy Spirit Catholic School – Took a different position

<sup>4</sup> No longer employed at Holy Spirit Catholic School – Family related

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## School Personnel and Positions

Dean Ashley*	Middle School Social Studies & Physical Education
Sue Ashley*	Tiny Tots/Pre-Kindergarten Teacher
Shani Baker	Teacher's Aide
Helen Boysun	Administrative Assistant
Linda Erickson	Pre-Kindergarten Teacher
Jerry Ferderer	Title
Judy Flint	Administrative Assistant
Nicole Hedstrom*	Middle School Math & Science
Kevin Hieb	Janitor
Kristin Jensen	Extended Care Provider
Michelle Jezewski	Extended Care Provider
Susan Kalanick	Fifth Grade Teacher
Mary Mathson	Fourth Grade Teacher
*	Food Service Director
Brenda Meyer	Extended Care Director
Charlotte Moseman	Reading & English
Meghan Nickol	Extended Care Provider
Laura O'Neill	Religion, Art & Keyboarding
Carrie Parker*	Kindergarten Teacher
Mary Richards	Extended Care Provider
Sherrri Schmitz*	First Grade
Karlene Schraner	Music, Band & Choir
Emily Seaton	Spanish
Vonnie Smith	Second Grade
Marilyn Uptmor	Food Service Assistant
Lisa Urick*	Media/Library
Erin Voeller	Third Grade Teacher
Jim Wichman	Principal
Mary Wingerter	Development Director
Ray Wrobel	Bus Driver

\*New staff for the 2015-16 school year.

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

### A. HOW THE SELF STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

The WCEA Improving Student Learning Self Study process for Holy Spirit Catholic School began during the winter of 2014 at the recommendation of then MT Catholic School Superintendent, Dr. Patrick Haggerty. He strongly recommended that Holy Spirit Catholic School become accredited by the WCEA.

The principal appointed a volunteer accreditation coordinator to help facilitate the process. The next step was to identify, define and teach School-wide Learning Expectations. Holy Spirit Catholic School is mission driven, and operates from a strong philosophy and set of beliefs. The SLEs and Vision grew from the Mission, Philosophy and beliefs the staff was already working from. The staff worked in small groups and as a whole to create an acronym to make the SLEs fun and easy to remember for our students. These were approved by the school board and made a part of Holy Spirit Catholic School's learning environment by means of posters, morning announcements, web site posting and classroom work.

Focus Groups and a Leadership Team were soon created. Focus groups were assigned based on skills and interests and each included faculty, staff, school advisory board members, parents and parish representatives. A training session was held to give the focus groups information and direction. At that session, each group identified an organizational leader, a writer to compile the information and a representative to the Leadership Team. By the end of the session, the Leadership Team had a representative from each focus group and included a mix of faculty, staff, School Advisory Board members and parents.

The Leadership Team and Focus Groups began meeting, discussing and gathering information during the spring of 2014. Surveys of the students, parents, staff and school leadership were completed during fall of 2014. The compilation of the self-study began in December of 2014.

Focus groups included parents who were involved in each step of the self study. They were also represented on the Leadership Team. School Advisory members were each assigned to a Focus Group and were represented on the Leadership Team. Individual School Advisory Board Members served as organizers, Leadership Team representatives and writers. The majority of School Advisory Board members took an active role in the Focus Groups and on the Leadership Team for the self-study process.

The self-study committees were not given set meeting times. Each group came up with dates, times and meeting lengths that worked best for their members. Appendix D provides meeting information for the Leadership Team and Focus Groups.

The self-study process was not without challenges, especially since the process itself was new to the school. The school principal was also new to both the school and position when the process started. Two major challenges faced by those in the self-study groups were meeting times and data collection. The school had just received a large grant from the E.L. Weigand Foundation for a library/media center and science lab. The physical plant was under construction, which was

a time consuming process for the principal, development director and staff. Simultaneously the staff was learning how to integrate the new technology into classroom instruction, as well as to incorporate curriculum with Common Core. The School Advisory Board and parents tend to be those most active in their children's lives, at work and in the community, because of this, it was challenging for them to work more meetings into their schedules. The Catholic Schools Study Commission also formed and began meeting during the process of completing the Self-Study. Finding meeting times to accommodate everyone's schedules proved difficult to the Focus Groups and Leadership Team. In addition, gathering testing data to identify student achievement over a continuum was challenging. During the process of the self-study, the MAP test was implemented at Holy Spirit School.

A real benefit to the self-study is that the current Holy Spirit Catholic School community (faculty, staff, parents and leadership) is not afraid to look at the school honestly and assess where the school is at and what can be improved. Therefore this process is of great benefit for improving the school and student achievement.

## **B. INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION OF SHAREHOLDERS IN COMPLETING THE SELF STUDY**

*The school involves all shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning.*

The Holy Spirit Catholic School culture includes an engaged and involved community of parents. Many parents volunteer in the classroom, for home and school, in fundraising, at community building activities and for extra-curricular activities and programs affiliated with the school. With that high level of involvement comes increased communication among parents, faculty, staff and school leadership. The majority of parents are willing to share concerns and ideas with the principal, faculty and staff. Because there is a culture of communication, the shareholders participating in the self-study were able to bring many differing perspectives to the discussion.

The involvement and collaboration of shareholders in the self-study was an important part of setting up the Focus Groups and Leadership Team. Every faculty and staff member was assigned to a group. The Leadership Team representation included faculty, staff, the administrator, parents, School Advisory Board members, parish members and alumni. Those participating in the self-study focus groups also included parents, a grandparent, alumni, a recent alumnus and a parish staff member. Parents represented included those with children in the pre-school program, elementary, middle school as well as those whose older children have graduated from Holy Spirit Catholic School. Depending on the ages of their children and years they have spent in the school, they brought different perspectives to the groups. The questions and discussions provided an opportunity to learn, grow and share those perspectives for both the staff and non-staff participants.

All of the surveys for parents, staff, students and leadership were completed, with the results distributed to the focus groups and leadership team. The results were also reviewed by the Leadership Team to help develop action plans for the school.

The Catholic Identity group was very strong in its representation of all types of shareholders. Through the surveys, a history of attention to our Catholic Identity and representation in the Catholic Identity group, the input into the Catholic Identity assessment of the school was very strong.

The Mission, vision, philosophy, beliefs and SLEs were developed from the history, culture and environment of Holy Spirit Catholic School. The Mission Statement was reviewed, revised and approved in 2009. The newest version started with the faculty and staff with informal input from parents and families. The pastor and school advisory board also reviewed and revised the Mission statement. The Philosophy and Beliefs were developed and refined with the new principal beginning in 2012 and were approved and adopted in the spring of 2013. With a strong Mission, Philosophy and Statement of Beliefs, the development of the SLEs was a process of identifying what out of these statements was to be learned and lived by the students of Holy Spirit Catholic School. They were put into an acronym that would be easy for even the youngest

of students to learn and understand, further defined and clarified and approved by the School Advisory Board at the February 27, 2014 meeting. They are posted in each classroom as well as around the school, have become part of daily announcements and are often referred to as behavior expectations in the building.

Data Analysis of student learning involved parents as well as school staff through a review of the appendices completed by the principal. This data was from two or more years ago since the school just implemented MAPS testing this year. The data was reviewed by the focus groups and Leadership Team. The data review focused on student learning to the extent possible with past test scores and the gap from the past two years. The data review and analysis also focused on the funding for Holy Spirit Catholic School. Having the funds necessary to educate students, update curriculum, purchase text books, improve technology and train staff is a key to improving student learning. The data analysis of budget, enrollment and fundraising demonstrates a commitment to improving student learning through adequate funding of the school.

It is difficult to glean much information from the current data about student learning because of the two year gap and the different tests administered. The current MAP test was researched and selected as the one that could best provide meaningful data to measure student improvement and support improvement in student learning for the future.

Shareholders were involved in the development of an Action Plan to address the needs of the school to improve student learning in a number of ways. The focus group discussions, information gathering and recommendations included a number of shareholders. All staff, students, parents, and members of the school leadership had the opportunity for input through the completion of one or more surveys. The Administration and Leadership Team reviewed the goals, survey results and focus group information to develop the Action Plans for improving student learning.

The provision for on-going systemic analysis of data is still being worked on because the current tests are new. The analysis and use of data will involve all teachers and will be utilized to look at strengths in teaching and, more importantly, where students are weak and how teachers can help them improve.

Individual student assessment results were reported to their parents through a letter. This communication will continue. Communicating the results of student assessment is extremely important to our shareholders and for recruitment and enrollment management. The accomplishment of benchmarks in the Action Plan is also important to holding the school accountable. Overall communication to constituents regarding the data analysis and accomplishment of benchmarks will include sharing information with the School Advisory Board, Parish Council, in Wednesday Envelopes (through the website and our School Management System, in the Parish Bulletins (Connections) and in the “Spirit” newsletter that goes to alumni, parents, donors and friends of Holy Spirit Catholic School.

**Evidence:**

- Survey data
- Committee meeting notes & rosters
- List of parents, alumni, staff, board members involved in Self Study Committees
- Action Plan that includes shareholders in monitoring and evaluation
- Connections
- Wednesday Envelope Announcements
- “Spirit” newsletter

## CHAPTER 2 – CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

### A. SCHOOL PROFILE (with supporting data)

Catholic education has been a powerful, successful family option for the education of elementary and secondary students in Great Falls for many years. The Ursuline sisters, who made their way to Great Falls in the early 1900s, were the first to bring Catholic education to the plains of Montana. The construction of the Ursuline Academy began shortly after their arrival and in 1912 they began educating children from Great Falls as well as many from around Montana who boarded at the academy. In the following decades Parishes with schools were opened including St. Gerard's (parish/school – 1947), Holy Family (parish – 1934/school – 1966) and Sts. Peter and Paul (parish/school – 1963).

In the mid-1970's, Bishop Murphy of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings asked the city of Great Falls to begin a parish-clustering process. St. Gerard, Holy Family and Sts. Peter and Paul parishes formed the Eastside Catholic Community. While each parish still had a school, separate Mass schedules and priests, they began sharing many other ministries. In the spring of 1985, with declining Catholic School enrollment, each of these three parishes decided to close its individual school and consolidate into one school. The committee chose the Holy Family School site as the location, and selected Blessed Trinity as the new school name. When the parishes completed the consolidation process in 1999, the school took on the name of the new parish: Holy Spirit Catholic School. At present, there are two Catholic elementary schools in Great Falls (both of which are Parish Schools) and one secondary, which is Diocesan.

Throughout our evolution, one thing has remained the same: the focus on rigorous, engaging academics in a faith-filled environment. The decline in the number of priests and nuns is evident in the history of our schools. In the early history, all classes were taught by religious staff has evolved over time to include both religious and lay people. The Holy Spirit School staff is currently made up of all lay people. However, we are blessed by the guidance and leadership of our Parish Priest, Fr. Dick Schlosser, and since the summer of 2014 the addition of Fr. David Wilkins. What has remained constant through the years of changes is the staff and faculty's dedication to providing the best possible academic and spiritual education for the children of God who enter our doors.

The Holy Spirit School's community geography and socio-economic setting has remained fairly consistent over the past 5 years. The number of subsidized lunches and scholarships have remained the same, the e-rate for technology services is at 40%; however, federal subsidized dollars have been greatly reduced. About thirty scholarships were given out of an enrollment of one hundred fifty-five K-8 students. This remains consistent with 19% of the school population receiving some scholarship dollars. Malmstrom Air Force Base representation has increased significantly in the past two years as we have improved communication and recruitment efforts with military families. We also provide them with a 10% discount on tuition. The bus service has expanded to include Malmstrom Air Force Base and a nearby housing development east of Great Falls.

Holy Spirit Catholic School is a parish school and at one time was also considered a neighborhood school. Currently, the school is not reflective of the neighborhood. The neighborhood is elderly, but this has not been harmful to the school. Since the shortage of priests and nuns triggered the consolidation of schools and parishes in Great Falls, parishes and their schools are no longer part of a neighborhood, but of the community as a whole. The low number of parishes in our community contributes to our not being a neighborhood school. HSCS is definitely a parish school with 74% of the student population registered as parishioners at Holy Spirit Catholic Parish. However, only 24% of parish students attend the school with the rest attending some school other than Holy Spirit. This continues to be a challenge and parish recruitment is a high priority for the Development Director.

Holy Spirit Catholic School serves families at and is supported by enrollment from Malmstrom Air Force Base. The largest non-parish contribution to our school in terms of enrollment comes from the Air Force Base. In recent years the Development Office and current Malmstrom families have worked hard to establish a presence on the base and it has paid off in terms of increasing enrollment and pulling in families who quickly become involved with the school.

Holy Spirit Catholic School does have students transfer in who are having trouble in their own school. Sometimes the change to a Catholic environment is beneficial to the student. In some cases, however, the school is not a good fit for the student transferring in and he/she is a distraction to the learning environment. The principal is working toward a process to get more information from a student's prior school before accepting transfer students.

The development and implementation of the SLEs have been a great addition to Holy Spirit Catholic School in helping students to understand what behavior is expected of them and what that behavior looks like. This is the first school year with the SLEs and they will become a more prominent part of the school culture with further implementation.

The Diocesan expectation as well as that of Holy Spirit School is for all teachers to be state certified. As far as religion/catechism, all teachers are working toward Marian certification and new staff will also work to become Marian certified. The program provides background information to enrich the teacher's Catholic Identity by exploring a relevant topic each year. Examples include church history and the Creed. Staff enrichment is also important as our faith includes a personal journey that is not necessarily teachable. The goal for the ratio of Catholic to non-Catholic teachers is to match the current student population. All staff are expected to live as responsible Christians and demonstrate respect for Catholic beliefs. The composition of support staff is included in the appendices.

The implementation of MAPS testing was necessary to provide accurate data regarding the percentage of students achieving at grade level. MAPS tests were given twice during the 2014-2015 school year and will be given three times during the school year in future years. Longitudinal Trends of standardized test scores and other assessment data are currently difficult to analyze based on testing changes and a gap in testing over the last several years. The teachers and staff know there are special groups of students on both ends of the learning spectrum. Again, the results of their test scores and assessment data will be utilized to meet individual

needs of students when the tests have been administered long enough to provide meaningful data.

While test data is challenging at this point in our school history, anecdotally we know Holy Spirit graduates do well once they go to High School. Principals, teachers and counsellors at the local high schools are complimentary about the education and work ethic they see in Holy Spirit Alumni. This is also demonstrated in the success of these students. For example, the Great Falls High School Class of 2015 included 286 students. Five of the top ten graduates were Holy Spirit Catholic School Alumni. Among the top 10 at Great Falls Central Catholic High School, three of the top ten were Holy Spirit Catholic School Alumni. The acceptance rate of students Great Falls Central Catholic High School has been at 100% since the high school opened.

The physical plant of Holy Spirit Catholic School includes a school building, playground, parking lot, rectory and chapel that used to be Holy Family Catholic Church. The building is solid and has been maintained; a contingency fund has been set aside for unexpected repairs. The school board includes a building and grounds committee and the new principal has been vigilant about improving the appearance and function of the building while paying attention to preventative maintenance. Home & School provides a small amount of funding and does many little projects to improve the appearance and environment. The school has a full time custodian, but really could use additional help with maintenance and minor repairs. The E.L.Weigand Grant just provided us with a new Science Lab, library/Media Center and one to one iPads. Home and School and a paddle raise helped pay for parking lot, playground and grounds improvements. In the future, many would like to see the windows that were closed off in the early 1980's re-opened and fitted with energy efficient windows to bring more natural light into the classrooms.

Holy Spirit Catholic School faces some unique and special challenges. One major challenge is divided resources because we are not part of a unified Catholic School system. Bringing the two Catholic Elementary Schools and one high school into one vibrant school system would increase support from the Great Falls Catholic Community as a whole. Funding is a constant challenge. Keeping tuition rates low enough so as not to exclude families because of cost leads to a need for a great deal of fundraising. Lack of funding makes it difficult to provide the resources needed to serve children at both ends of the educational spectrum. Recruitment and retention need continued work. Holy Spirit has a fairly low retention rate from the pre-school program to elementary school and again from elementary school to middle school. There is also a high percentage of Holy Spirit parish families who do not send their children to the school. The past two years have seen a higher than normal turn over in staff.

An interesting challenge the faculty has noticed is a change in the amount of time they are needing to spend training students on manners and behavior. Much time is being spent on students who are not well socialized to the way students are expected to behave in school. There is an overall attitude of entitlement and being more concerned about grades than learning that seems to be increasing every year. The staff would like to encourage leadership in a positive way, promote the joy of learning and of doing the right thing.

The survey results were very consistent with the majority of responses being similar. In each category, there were responses on both ends of the spectrum. There were two areas that stood out as being important for the school to focus on. One area was a request from parents wanting more services to help children on the lower end of the learning spectrum. Another area looked at in the survey responses was, who are we as a Catholic School? Responses ranged from not “Catholic” enough, to too much time spent on religion. "Who are we as a Catholic School" should be answered through the Catholic Identity section of the self-study process and/or be included as an action item.

As with every school struggling to raise funds and meet a budget, Holy Spirit Catholic School relies on volunteers for many things. The survey did uncover a difference in perception in that many parents felt a majority of the volunteer work was being done by a minority of parents. The final thing that stood out in the surveys was a very strong desire on the part of the staff to have time for personal faith development and a retreat.

## **B. USE OF PRIOR ACCREDITATION FINDINGS TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS**

*The school has used the prior accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement.*

Holy Spirit Catholic School has not been accredited by the WCEA or any other accrediting agency. The accreditation is a new experience and process for the school. In past years, the school leadership and staff have met and created 3-5 year action plans, but not in recent history. With a new principal (hired for fall of 2012) it is a good time to complete the self-study and develop an action plan to help improve student learning at Holy Spirit Catholic School now and in the future.

## CHAPTER 3 – QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL’S PROGRAM

### A. ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL’S CATHOLIC IDENTITY

*The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), provides authentic Catholic teaching, opportunities for community worship and participation in the sacraments, and promotes evangelization and service to the community.*

Holy Spirit Catholic School (HSCS) has a clear vision, mission and philosophy to educate and develop the whole child with Jesus as our Master Teacher. As is stated in our mission and philosophy statements, they are in alignment with the educational expectations for our students and work in conjunction with the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith. For example, our mission statement is published frequently and is posted at the entry of each classroom. The SLEs are a part of daily instruction; they are behavioral expectations for our students and are posted in our hallways as a daily visual reminder. All students were able to recite the SLEs for their grade level and many were clearly able to apply them to specific behavior.

Prayer is an important element of Holy Spirit Catholic School. During the day we have many opportunities to share in prayer with our school community. Beginning with daily staff prayer, followed by school-wide prayer each morning, meal and snack time prayer and ending each day with classroom prayer before dismissal, prayer is an integral part of each day. Based on the student surveys, 96% of the Kindergarten through third grade students strongly agreed or agreed that they had time to pray at school. (student surveys, Appendix C). The week begins with a Monday morning assembly and a different part of our faith development is emphasized every week. The week wraps up with Friday morning school Mass that family members and parishioners are invited to attend. Each class has the opportunity several times during the year to plan and be the ministers for their class Mass. The opportunity to be involved in the Liturgy develops a deeper understanding of and commitment to the Catholic faith.

Sacraments are available to all Holy Spirit Catholic School students. Students, through their faith formation, have the opportunity to complete the Sacraments of Initiation during the school year. Many student and family members have completed Sacraments as a result of growing their faith through their involvement with Holy Spirit Catholic School. Our weekly school mass gives students the opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is received by students two times a year during Lent and Advent or by appointment with the parish pastor. The Sacraments are introduced and taught throughout various grade levels during their Religious Formation classes.

St. Francis of Assisi said, “Preach the Gospel at all times, and only when necessary use words.” We believe Catholic education must always be inspired and guided by the Gospel and strengthened by adult witnesses in our school. Students are apt to be more willing to listen to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they see these teachers as witnesses. Our curriculum begins with what our educators do and how they act, which is more significant than what they say. The teaching staff and support staff gather each day for prayer before school begins. Our religious education coordinator meets with new teachers to answer any questions pertaining to the Catholic faith or about the preparations of our weekly

liturgies. Thus the spirit of Catholicism permeates the entire curriculum. Eighty nine percent of the Kindergarten through eighth grade students surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that they learned about their Catholic faith in school (student surveys, Appendix C).

Our curriculum includes texts that adhere to the Catholic Church's teachings as noted by the Ad Hoc Committee's Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur endorsements, which officially declares the text material is free of doctrinal and moral error. Our current texts include "I Am Special," which is published by Our Sunday Visitor and is used by our Kindergarten. Grades 1-5 use the legacy edition of "Faith First," published by Resources of Christian Living. The Faith First lessons are built upon the three foundations of Scripture & Church Tradition, worship & prayer, and the call to service. Grades 6-8 share "The Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schools," published by St. Mary's Press. It is a guide for young teens on what it means to follow Jesus and to be a Catholic today. It is accompanied by the Bible titled, "Break Through" which is a Bible for young Catholics.

The entire teaching staff has participated in Diocesan catechetical and instructional programs during professional development days. They have received the following instruction within the past years:

- † Nine Truths of Parental Involvement in Catholic Schools, Instructor: Dr. Patrick Haggarty, 3 hours 9/26/11
- † Catholic Schools and the Law, Instructor: Dr. Patrick Haggarty, 3 hours 3/16/12
- † Called to Teach: In-Service for the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, Instructor: Fr. Nuzzi, Notre Dame University, IN, 4 hours 9/14/12
- † Catholic School History and Philosophy: Instructor: Dr. Susan Abeline, Marian University, IN, 4 hours 10/17/12 essay required
- † The Creed of the Catholic Faith: Instructor: Sr. Kevina Keating, Marian University, IN, 3 hours 10/18/13, group work, paper required.
- † Protecting God's Children Diocesan Virtus Training and currently with the Safe and Sacred Program

The Marian training is a five-year program used to certify all teachers as Catholic educators. It is an ongoing program that will continue to train current and new hires. In addition, make up sessions are given the following year for those who were unable to attend the previous year's training.

This coming year 2015-16, the Diocese has offered a retreat for all new teachers. It will be held at the Ursuline Center in Great Falls on August 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>.

HSCS has made great strides in the past few years to increase parent involvement and parent communication. The use of technology has been embraced to allow for weekly communication from the school. During registration, all parents are asked to provide home & cell phone numbers as well as email addresses. Each Wednesday, the Principal e-mails the weekly bulletin to all parents and also provides a link to the School Management System (SMS). The SMS is a web-based software system that assists the school with many avenues of communication from academic progress, to discipline accounts, to announcements for upcoming events. During the

2014-2015 school year, 97% of parents reported reading the electronic Wednesday Envelope and 91% found it to be helpful. (parent survey, Appendix C). Teachers have the ability to upload all students' grades on a daily basis as well as quarterly report cards. In addition, the staff has the ability to see if the parents are viewing the information provided. The HSCS website is also a great source of information for parents. The website has a "Parents" tab that displays information regarding both parish and school activities.

Formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled two times during the school year. This is a great opportunity for teachers to share information about the student with the parents. Additional conferences are scheduled when a parent or faculty member feels a need.

### **Significant Accomplishments:**

- The entire school community (staff, students, and parents) follow the beliefs, teachings, and traditions of the Catholic Church regardless of their faith background.
- Weekly Masses and the students' leadership and participation, as well as parental and parishioner attendance, followed by the "host" class's "After Mass Reception" for students and guests, have a significant impact on faith formation.
- Each year a number of students are initiated into the Catholic faith, and we further encourage all of our students to continue their faith formation by attending Central Catholic High School and to be active, contributing stewards of their parish/church.
- Believing in the power of prayer, we incorporate it throughout each day. As a staff, we begin each morning gathered together in prayer before the students arrive followed by a principal-led school wide prayer over the intercom at 8:05 AM. Monday morning assemblies led by different staff members each week are an inspiration and witness to the entire school community.
- We look for opportunities to live the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy through our stewardship and service.

### **Goals:**

- Implementation of new religion standards.
- Certification of all teachers as Catholic religious educators. This is an ongoing program through Marian University that will certify current teachers and new teachers. These classes will enrich the teacher in their appreciation of the Catholic faith and enhance their teaching experience in the classroom and to the school community as a whole.
- Staff retreats, such as the New Teacher Retreat, August 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> at the Ursuline Center, to bring about a school wide staff Catholic Identity.
- Select a school wide theme such as "We will work to improve reverence, respect, and manners" to educate students at our Monday Morning Assemblies.

## **Evidence:**

- Morning staff prayer
- Morning, lunch and dismissal prayer
- Monday morning all school prayer assembly
- Mission Statement
- Philosophy
- Vision
- Beliefs
- SLEs
- Formal prayers taught during religion classes
- Prayer services
  - Monday Morning Assembly - gymnasium
  - 7:25 am staff prayer – room 1
  - 8:00 am morning prayer over the intercom
  - Prayer partners – classes partner up, such as Kindergarten and 8<sup>th</sup> grade meet, have prayer and faith building.
  - Weekly Mass at Holy Family Chapel
  - Prayer service for the middle school students as they meet before they leave on their beginning of the year retreat.
- Praying the Mysteries of the Holy Rosary
- Weekly Mass Schedules
- Stations of the Cross during Lent
- Lesson Plan Binders
- School Religion Curriculum
- School Liturgies
- Adults witnessing the Gospel and Catholicism
- Textbooks, Bible, Daily & Seasonal prayer, liturgy, liturgy connections to daily life, sacraments, service to others, prayer partners, study of saint's lives and sacramentals.
- HSCS Parish Website *www.* <http://www.holyspiritgf.org/school/>
- SMS - Ascend: <https://holyspiritgfschool.ascendsms.com/>
- Friday Mass; weekly 8:30 am
- Reconciliation Service
- Student Survey Results (Appendix C)
- Parent Survey Results (Appendix C)

## **B. DEFINING THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE**

*The school's purpose is defined through the school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

The Mission, vision, philosophy, beliefs and SLEs were developed from the history, culture and environment of Holy Spirit Catholic School and Parish. The Mission Statement was reviewed, revised and approved in 2009. The newest version started with the faculty and staff with informal input from parents and families. The pastor and school advisory board also reviewed and revised the Mission statement. The Philosophy and Beliefs were developed and refined with the new principal beginning in 2012 and were approved and adopted in the spring of 2013. The parent survey results indicate that 86% of parents surveyed indicated that they knew the school has a mission statement and philosophy.

The Holy Spirit Catholic School Mission and Philosophy reflect the values of our parish and school. As a Catholic School, we are called to support parents in the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. We look to the life and teachings of Jesus to demonstrate how we are to love, respect and serve others. All students are capable and staff and parents work together to help each child realize their full potential.

With a strong Mission, Philosophy and Statement of Beliefs, the development of the SLEs was a process of identifying what out of these statements was to be learned and lived by the students of Holy Spirit Catholic School. The development process for the SLE's began with a review of the mission, philosophy and beliefs of the school followed by a large group discussion of how students from Holy Spirit Catholic School would live their lives. The large group was broken into smaller groups to further discuss and define the qualities of a Holy Spirit School student. It was suggested by a staff member to use an acronym to help the students remember the SLE's. They were put into an acronym that would be easy for even the youngest of students to learn and understand, further defined and clarified and approved by the School Advisory Board at the February 27, 2014 meeting

SOAR with the SPIRIT was selected and the words to fit with the qualities were attached to the acronym. The SLE's are posted in each classroom as well as around the school, have become part of daily announcements and are often referred to as behavior expectations in the building.

### ***Our Mission –***

*With Jesus as the Master Teacher, Holy Spirit Catholic School develops in each child an active and creative mind, a sense of understanding Catholic values through compassion, respect and service to others, and the courage to act on those values.*

***Our Vision – Together we pray, learn, act and serve.***

## ***Our Philosophy –***

*Holy Spirit Catholic School exists for the specific purpose of supporting parents in forming the minds and character of students in the spiritual and moral values of Jesus Christ according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. We believe that the image of God is present in students and staff. We believe every student is a capable and worthwhile individual. Therefore as we promote academic excellence, while fostering the total development of each student, we believe we must create an atmosphere of reflection, prayer, love, affirmation, responsibility and creativity for our staff and students while also serving our community.*

### ***SLE's***

*S – Serve others*

*O – Own your actions*

*A – Act with God*

*R – Respect the right to learn*

*With the*

*S – Stewards of God's Creation*

*P – Problem solvers*

*I – Independent, life-long learners*

*R – Responsible Christians*

*I – Inspirational leaders*

*T – Trustworthy citizens*

The Holy Spirit Catholic School community of administration, faculty, students and parents, strives to integrate high academic standards through a faith based curriculum, supported by our school wide learning expectations, SOAR with the SPIRIT. The SLE's were further defined to reflect our Catholic Identity and the qualities that create the culture at Holy Spirit Catholic School.

S – Serve others

- Service to our community
- Service to our parish
- Service to our world

O – Own your actions

- Encourage honesty
- Encourage students to accept responsibility for their actions
- Encourage students to make good choices

A – Act with God

- To treat others as you would like to be treated
- To be tolerant and accepting of all
- To see Christ in others

R – Respect the right to learn

- Being respectful of everyone's right to learn
- Being engaged in self-disciplined focused thinking
- Being empathetic to the needs of others

S – Stewards of God's Creation

- Respecting school property and surroundings
- Respecting your community
- Respecting your world

P – Problem solvers

- Become good critical thinkers
- Become broad minded thinkers
- Become creative thinkers

I – Independent, life-long learners

- Develop a thirst for knowledge
- Develop an interest in current events at home and abroad
- Develop a continuing faith journey

## R – Responsible Christians

- Engaged in your faith
- Engaged in your parish community
- Engaged in your stewardship to others and the environment

## I – Inspirational leaders

- Lead others to Christ
- Lead by good example
- Lead good Christian lives

## T – Trustworthy citizens

- Empower ourselves and each other to act on our Catholic values
- Empower the poor in Spirit
- Empower others to live a virtuous life

The School-wide Learning Expectations are new as of Fall 2014 to Holy Spirit Catholic School, however, they have been and will continue to be integrated into daily life at the school through announcements, posters, behavior discussions and discipline. These help define the purpose of the school and are lived out at Holy Spirit School in many ways.

Strong and challenging academics have been consistent since Holy Spirit Catholic School was formed. The school provides students with a strong academic and faith based educational foundation as evidenced through anecdotal reports from teachers and staff at the high schools Holy Spirit alumni attend. Holy Spirit Alumni and their parents often praise how well Holy Spirit prepared them for high school and beyond. Even though testing has been inconsistent for a number of reasons, the test results that are available demonstrate the academic success of Holy Spirit students. (Appendix B & Appendix C)

Teaching service to others is important to staff, students and parents at Holy Spirit Catholic School. Service is provided to others in many different ways. All classes, first through eighth grade take turns hosting Friday school Masses. Students serve their school community as greeters, ushers, cross bearers, altar servers, gift presenters, lectors and cantors. The Middle School Student Council hosts dances and other activities that include food drives and or an admission fee, they have held clothing drives, made blankets or fund raised to assist families or people in need. The whole school participated in a blanket making day during Catholic Schools Week and donated the blankets to Great Falls Family Promise. The blankets were made by prayers partner groups with fabric donated by Holy Spirit school families. Individual classes often do special projects or drives during the holidays to benefit those in need in our community.

During Lent, students and families participate in the “Rice Bowl” fundraiser, with classes often holding contests to help raise additional funds for the poor. This particular fundraiser connects the school community with that of the Parish community.

As a parish school, it is important to connect the parish community and school community. The weekly parish bulletin includes a section for Holy Spirit Catholic School and includes a monthly newsletter called “Connections” to keep parish members informed about the school. Monthly Sunday masses are scheduled at the Parish with Holy Spirit School students, alumni and families serving as greeters, ushers, cross bearers, lectors, altar servers, Eucharistic ministers and the music ministry. Holy Spirit Catholic School students wear their uniforms to these Masses and this provides a very strong visual reminder of how active and involved in the ministries the school families are in the parish. Holy Spirit School families also host coffee and rolls for the parish community after Sunday Masses once each month.

The Holy Spirit School Philosophy states that parents are the primary educators of their children and that is a belief held by the administration, staff and parents. All are working together to educate children. It is necessary for parents to support the mission of the school and Holy Spirit has very involved and supportive parents. The School Advisory Council is made up of a number of parents, in addition to serving on the council, each member also serves on at least one committee including Finance, Policy and Procedures, Development and Building and Grounds. Parents are active in Home and School (the parent-teacher organization), the Booster Club (for athletics), Development Fundraisers including the Gala, Dare to Dream Annual Fund, Spirit Walk, and Cow Pie Bingo. Parents also support the school as volunteers for Grandfriends Day, reading in the classroom, working in the kitchen, supporting classroom activities and chaperoning field trips.

### **Significant Accomplishments:**

- Holy Spirit School provides students with a strong academic and faith based educational foundation.
- Holy Spirit Catholic School teaches and encourages service to others in a variety of ways.
- Holy Spirit Catholic School provides a connection to the parish community.
- Holy Spirit Catholic School educates students through a partnership with parents.
- Holy Spirit Catholic School teaches students to be responsible Christians in our community.
- Holy Spirit Catholic School strives to teach students to model Christ like behavior.

## **Goals:**

- Promote active participation of students and alumni as member of their parish.
- Integrate technology into Religion.
- Holy Spirit students and alumni understand and apply the knowledge of their faith through their treatment of and service to others.
- Further integrate the SLE's into the culture of the school.

## **Evidence:**

- School Calendar Mass Schedule
- Church Bulletins
- "Connections" newsletter in Parish Bulletin
- Annual Coffee and Rolls hosting schedule
- Home and School Meeting Minutes
- Booster Club Meeting Minutes
- Gala planning committee minutes
- Development Events & Activities
- Kitchen volunteer schedule
- Catholic Schools Week Activity flier & photos
- Student Council Notes
- Lesson plans and observations for integrating technology into Religion classes
- Student test results (Appendix B)
- Faith-based curriculum (Appendix C)
- Parent Surveys (Appendix C)
- Student's ability to recite SLE's
- SLE's posted throughout the building

## **C. ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS**

*The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders.*

Under the guidance of our pastor, Fr. Dick Schlosser, Holy Spirit Catholic School offers parents and their children a welcoming, faith-filled and academically rigorous environment. Our community's spiritual growth is centered in prayer and service to others, and we endeavor to meet the needs of every student and family.

Our Pastor plays a pivotal role, both in the community's religious formation and nurturing, as well as in the staff's and students' focus on academic excellence. His pride in the school is evident to the parishioners and they enjoy updates and news regarding our progress. He and they are generous with financial support as well.

The school advisory board supports and advises the principal regarding curriculum changes, enhancing Catholic Identity, improving the school's physical and learning environments and allocating funds to maximize high student achievement.

The Development Office works hard to support student learning. They recently attained a grant from the E.L.Weigand Foundation for the purpose of improving the library and science lab. An additional E.L.Weigand grant (with a required matching grant from our community) allowed us to equip each classroom with short-throw projectors, document readers, smart boards with an Apple TV component, and iPads for all students and teachers.

Communication among the principal, pastor and faculty serves as a key component in organizing, implementing and assessing the highest attainable achievement of our students. Daily prayer and updates before school as well as weekly faculty meetings (middle school/elementary) ensure goals are attained or modified to improve upon our current progress.

Tried and true methods of sending notes or emails, telephone calls and face to face communication between parents and staff is utilized and encouraged. In addition, communication is extended to families through electronic weekly bulletins and the online grading program that provides parents access to student progress, homework and expectations. Teachers use both formal and informal assessments, posting the results weekly on the SMS data base. The use of this data base has expanded the modes of communication between home and school.

Teachers are willing and encouraged to support one another by observing and advising their peers, so that all may improve in helping each student achieve his or her full potential. Communication between grade levels is also vital at Holy Spirit. Teachers prepare written evaluations of individual students for the next grade-level teacher. This allows every staff member to anticipate and prepare for the needs of each student. Teachers who have identified struggling students are willing and able to tailor instruction to those individual's needs, which (if

we conclude our staff does not have the needed expertise), can involve a child going to another campus for specialized contained-classroom support.

Beyond the core curriculum and training in technology, Holy Spirit rounds out student education with additional classes in the Liberal Arts. The walls are decorated with children's projects from art classes, the halls echo with the singing of our choir and the practice sessions of our band. Fourth through eighth grade students can be heard practicing Spanish skits.

In addition to daily prayer and weekly Mass, our students experience an active faith-presence through interaction with prayer partners. Each upper grade level meets frequently with a younger grade to share their faith through projects and service to the community. Building trusting relationships within our school community nurtures the commitment we have to produce life-long learners who recognize the importance of serving others.

Holy Spirit endeavors to focus on the emotional, academic and spiritual needs of its students. This whole person focus promotes the high academic achievement of all students. Through daily prayer, classroom prayer services, Reconciliation, weekly student-led Masses and service projects, the school community (staff, students, and parents) centers its life around "promoting the Catholic faith in an environment of cultural diversity, opportunity, service, forgiveness and love."

### **Significant Accomplishments:**

- A safe, welcoming and responsive learning environment
- High expectations in academics, behavior and service
- An active and visible faith-presence in our school and its community
- A dedicated and professional staff
- Frequent interactions among the various grade-levels which builds community
- Widespread implementation of technology
- Annual student evaluations
- Committed pastor and active School Advisory Board

### **Goals:**

- Establish continuity and clarity in procedures for communication with stakeholders and in decision-making.
- Establish clear guidelines for accommodating special-needs students.
- Improve the math program by focusing on appropriate professional development, curricula and texts.
- Establish elementary reading and writing programs.

## **Evidence:**

- All school participation in Monday morning assembly for prayer and preview of upcoming week.
- Daily staff and school-wide morning and afternoon prayer lead by the principal.
- Weekly Mass prepared by the students (including the music), rotated by grade, with 8<sup>th</sup> grade and kindergarten prayer partners sharing a Mass.
- School-wide participation in prayer intentions, prayer chains, prayer-partner activities, field trips, service projects, Stations of the Cross, Reconciliation, church feast days.
- Community access to information online at Schoolspeak.com regarding school activities, announcements, and (by means of passwords) students' progress and teachers' comments.
- Teacher's individualized contact with parents through informal conversations, phone calls, emails and conferences.
- Teachers' continuing education through classes, workshops, discussions, collaborations, and personal reading/studying.
- Online "Wednesday Envelope" with announcements and event postings for the school, the community at large, Home and School, Booster Club and sports.
- School Newsletters (see binder)
- Parent testimonials about the staff's willingness to accommodate both students who struggle as well as those who are advanced.
- Testimonials from faculty at Great Falls' three high schools as to the caliber and quality of Holy Spirit Catholic School graduates.
- Testimonials from alumni.
- Past CRT and Iowa Basics test results placing our students in the top 10% in achievement.
- MAP testing was initiated for the 2014-15 school year.
  - Grades 3 – 8 were tested during the winter and spring.
  - Science testing was included for grades 5 - 8.
  - HSCS is committed to an ongoing testing program K-8 by enrolling in MAP testing for the 2015-16 school year.
  - MAP testing for HSCS has been expanded to grades K-8, with science Purchased a new math series K-8

## **D. DATA ANALYSIS AND ACTION TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS**

*The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement.*

Holy Spirit Catholic School has used standardized testing programs (Montana CRTs and Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)) to test grades three through eight in areas of Reading, Math, and Science from 2007 through 2013. Holy Spirit Catholic School chose to drop the administration of the ITBS testing program starting with the 2013-14 school year for three reasons: 1) It is a once-a-year summative test, 2) the norms are outdated, and 3) most states have dropped the ITBS as its source for measuring academic progress. Holy Spirit would use the Montana CRTs for future testing. Late in the 2013-14 school year Montana chose to be a test state for the new Smarter Balance testing program and with that adoption the Montana CRTs were cancelled by the State. Montana would test all the public schools with this new program and private elementary schools from the State of Montana were not invited to participate. This contributed to our schools having no formal testing in the 2013-14 school year.

Starting in 2014-15, Holy Spirit Catholic School implemented Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing in order to start collecting, once again, standards-based assessment data which will allow the School to assess changes and adjust the curriculum as needed. MAP testing is put out by the Northwest Evaluation Association. MAP testing results will allow the school's staff to analyze and interpret the data to further inform instruction and to guide decision making. MAP testing is linked to Common Core.

In the 2014-15 year, grades three through eight were tested in the areas of Reading, Math, and Language Arts; in addition, grades five through eight were tested in Science. The school expects to test all grades, Kindergarten through Eighth Grade, beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

MAP testing is a computer adapted test, assessing each individual student's knowledge base. The information from the testing will be used to measure individual and class academic growth within the school year, as well as compare our students to other students in our school, in the state, and in the nation, to better illustrate areas of strength, growth and improvement. MAP testing provides a tool for teachers to identify student learning levels. Instruction can then focus on the learning levels of each student and progress students forward in their learning. The data will also provide an overall understanding of the school's educational system. The regular analysis and interpretation of assessment data positively impacts student performance and guides the faculty in making decisions regarding curriculum and instruction.

MAP testing results will be published within 48 hours of all students completing their tests. The school sends home the test results of individual children to their parents after each test. For the 2014-15 school year, MAP testing was completed twice, once at mid-year and a second time spring quarter. MAP testing for the 2014-15 school year was a learning experience that will help the school be more prepared in future years. The greatest result of the process was that it established baseline testing scores for HSCS. In addition, since the test was administered with

iPads, there were issues and glitches that needed to be worked out. These issues may or may not have had an effect on test results.

- Configuring the iPad for the test by activating lockdown features.
- Testing site went down during testing session.
- Local internet service provider had a break in service.
- Lockdown feature did not function properly.

For the 2015-16 school year and future years, MAP tests will be expanded to include grades K-2 and administered three times; once fall quarter, a second time at mid-year, and the third time in the spring. By testing three times a year, not only do we get a local, statewide, and national comparison of student academic achievement, we get a student's individual growth. That individual growth can be targeted to specific goals.

The MAP test results are reported on a RIT scale. Those results can be used as a summative measurement for local, statewide, and comparisons. The RIT score will also be used to measure a student's academic growth during the school year. The curricular areas of mathematics, reading, language, and science are broken down into three or four goal areas. Teachers will be able to determine the students learning level for each goal area and differentiate their instruction to match the students learning level.

Even with the challenges faced in setting up the MAP testing this year, Holy Spirit Catholic School students demonstrated academic success by scoring above the mean in every test at every grade level in a comparison to MT Catholic school test results. (Appendix B-6).

Professional development has focused on differentiating and individualizing instruction to best meet the needs of all students. Examples of professional development that Holy Spirit School teachers have completed include:

- Golden Triangle- Curriculum Consortium (Writing curriculum to keep it updated to current standards)
- Northwest Evaluation Association (MAP adaptive assessment, online in-service)
- Technology deployment (In-service for teachers on-site – iPads, Projectors, Instruction)
- Marian University (Religious training for teaching Catholic education)
- Region 2 Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (Various classes often leaning toward teaching children with special needs and behavior challenges)

Holy Spirit Catholic School has set aside funds for the Marian University training and local professional development workshops for the use of technology in classrooms. In addition, teachers select their own workshops to attend to continue their certification and own personal development.

Holy Spirit Catholic School faculty has expanded professional development in the last year to include learning new technology. With the addition of iPads for each student and interactive short-throw projectors in every classroom, all teachers needed the education necessary to best

incorporate this technology to benefit students' learning. As an on-going development of Catholic Education in the school, teachers complete Marian University classes. These provide the necessary tools to improve religious knowledge of the teachers to instruction of the students.

Future plans for professional development will be impacted by assessment results. Data from the testing will show the impact on student learning, and reveal developing trends over time. Once this assessment data is available, it is believed (based on historical trends) that the professional development activities and continuing education will address the needs based on the data.

A variety of instructional materials have been purchased to further meet student needs. The following are examples of instruction materials purchased:

- iPads
- Learning apps for iPads
- Interactive short-throw projectors
- Document reader
- White boards
- Apple T.V.
- Khan Academy Subscription
- Major updates to the science lab, including new microscopes and lab tables
- Major updates to the library, including Resource Mate and laptops
- Manipulative math kits

Student Learning Expectations (SLEs) are incorporated daily. SOAR with the SPIRIT is recited every day to help students learn and remember those expectations.

**SOAR:**

- **S**erve others
- **O**wn your actions
- **A**ct with God
- **R**espect the right to learn

**SPIRIT:**

- **S**tewards of Gods' creation
- **P**roblem solvers
- **I**ndependent life-long learners
- **R**esponsible Christians
- **I**nspirational leaders
- **T**rustworthy citizens

Students are assessed on the SLEs by being asked to recite them. In addition, the curriculum, discipline, teaching methods, and student behaviors incorporate the SLEs. The school is working on a rubric to assess the students' perception of the SLEs.

There is regular communication among the school administration and staff, parents, parish and the greater community. The school management system is instrumental in creating a bridge between teachers and other staff and the parents. In addition, Parent-Teacher conferences throughout the year and an open door policy for parents to schedule meetings to discuss concerns or questions that arise. Of the parents who completed the survey, 93% indicated that the staff was easily accessible and 91% of parents surveyed indicated that they were comfortable discussing problems with the principal and staff. (parent surveys, Appendix C). The school's website is an excellent tool to help communicate with our local community as well as reach those outside of the school community. There is regular communication in the weekly parish bulletin regarding the happenings and current needs to keep parishioners informed about the school. Newsletters are sent throughout the year to Alumni, parishioners, and other supporters' (individuals and businesses) of the school.

Enrollment trends have shown a steady decline over the past 10 years, with a total of 228 students in 2005-06 and 190 students in 2014-15. However, there is a positive trend in grades three through eight where classes have not declined but maintained or increased enrollment numbers in recent years. Financial trends have seen positive growth. Collectively, the school's major fundraising events netted \$56,000 in 2010-11 and netted \$97,000 in 2013-14. In 2013-14, the school applied for and was awarded a grant from the E.L. Wiegand Foundation in the amount of \$149,000. In addition, the award required the School to raise matching funds of \$75,000. We exceeded the match, raising over \$98,000.

### **Significant Accomplishments:**

- Technology upgrades
- Library, Media Center & Science Lab upgrades
- MAP testing implementation
- Staff development in reading and writing with Common Core
- Staff development through Marian University
- Growth in fundraising activities to support the school and its mission
- Raising over \$98,000 to secure the full matching grant from the E.L. Wiegand Foundation

### **Goals:**

- Use the data collected from MAP testing to differentiate instruction
- Have consistent math and reading curriculum from Kindergarten through eighth grade
- Develop age-appropriate SLE rubrics

**Evidence:**

- List of professional development courses taken by staff
- Technology hardware in the classrooms
- MAP testing results
- Annual financial reports
- Parent Surveys (Appendix C)

## E. HIGH ACHIEVEMENT BY ALL STUDENTS TOWARD CLEARLY DEFINED SLES AND CURRICULUM STANDARDS

*All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards.*

HSCS provides a Christian based comprehensive and challenging curriculum for each student that reflects our Student Learning Expectations and follows a guided and researched curriculum developed by the Golden Triangle Curriculum Cooperative (GTCC). The GTCC was formed to address curriculum, assessments and professional development for its member schools in response to changes, reforms and mandates that affected national and state education standards. The GTCC is a consortium that has thirty-two K-12, fourteen K-8 and two 9-12 rural Montana and private schools. Through our recently developed SLE's and curriculum we are ensuring that the children at Holy Spirit Catholic School are making acceptable progress towards these learning goals.

The SLEs were developed last year and put into place this current year by the school staff and were approved by Father Schlosser and the school advisory committee. The SLEs form the acronym Soar with the Spirit, and are as follows:

S-Serve others, O-Own your actions, A-Act with God, R-Respect the right to learn *with the* S-Stewards of God's creation, P-Problem solvers, I-Independent lifelong learners, R-Responsible Christians, I-Inspirational leaders, T-Trustworthy citizens.

The SLEs are recited each morning by staff and discussed in each classroom. There are posters in the hallways and classrooms to facilitate discussions and understanding, and these were also sent home with the children to facilitate a discussion in the home. Teachers are in the process of creating SLE rubrics to determine how the SLEs can be further incorporated in other areas of the school, for example, the hallways, at recess, during lunch and also how these will be measured with the students.

This spring, the Montana Catholic Schools adopted new religion standards which show the grade-level standards for learning material, prayers, liturgy, and service. The challenge for the coming year will be integrating these standards into the already-established religion curriculum.

HSCS uses a variety of formative and summative assessments to determine the academic success and needs of the children. Examples of formative assessments include (but are not limited to) tests, quizzes, projects, presentations, essay papers, and text book and teacher generated tests. As an example, in one of our intermediate level classes, there is a project on Catholic Saints. With this project students research their selected Saint, write a report, and make an oral presentation to the class. Summative assessments include group projects, observations, arts and crafts projects, assessment of daily work and class activities. The SLEs are incorporated into the summative assessments by observing behavior in the classroom and when working with others.

HSCS utilizes a publicly funded Title I program that assists the staff with students at risk and helps to test students who are achieving at a higher level. The Title I program is available five

days a week for ½ days to assist the students with math and reading. Formative and summative assessments are used by teachers and the school administration to determine which students qualify for the Title I program. We also utilize foster grandparents and parent volunteers in the classroom to assist teachers with children that do not qualify for Title I but the teacher has determined through assessments the need for additional assistance. Small class sizes enable our teachers to spend extra time with children at risk. Additionally, teachers at other grade levels can intervene and assist children either at risk or achieving at a higher academic level. The curriculum can be modified as needed to work with parents and/or the school administration to develop short or long term goals to meet students' learning needs.

HSCS has purchased a new K-8 math series for the 2015-21 school years. It is combined program of e-books and consumables. It is a six year subscription that balances paper use and technology. Grades K-8 will make use of a consumable product whereas the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades will be using e-books along with the traditional math book. Math was chosen as a top priority for curriculum upgrade because it showed the greatest need based on past testing performances. The next curricular area to get a new facelift will be religion and reading.

HSCS lacks a formalized gifted and talented program, and the staff recognizes that this is needed. To accommodate the student's needs at a gifted level we test them with the Title I program to determine their learning level. Once learning level is determined, small class size and flexible curriculum allow teachers to tailor testing and programing at the student's individual level. Teachers challenge students independently or in small groups with questions, higher level projects, higher level reading and research. The current reading series has multiple levels of readers available as a resource to our staff to utilize for higher achieving students. HSCS has obtained a technology grant that has allowed new technology for our staff and students. Incorporating these items into the classrooms allows for a broader range of learning levels in each classroom and will go beyond the limits of the textbooks. There is also a new library and science lab that were part of the grant that will bring new resources to our children. A voluntary Science Club meets monthly after school for 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students. This was developed by parent and teacher volunteers to encourage learning and Science in a fun environment. When middle school students expressed an interest, a grammar club was also formed.

HSCS parents learned about their child's progress through School Speak last year, and will continue with SMS beginning with the 2015-2016 school year. This is a website that the teachers and administrators use to promote student accountability and learning. Emails to any HSCS staff can be done through School Speak or SMS, as well as inform the parents of homework assignments, grades, and progress reports on a weekly basis. This is new to HSCS, and our parent involvement is increasing with this new method of communication. HSCS continues to supplement the information by having hard copies of the information available to parents if needed or desired.

Catholic Identity is a strong component of HSCS with Mass hosted each week by a different grade level, daily morning prayer, as well as prayer in the classrooms. It is incorporated into the curriculum through projects and community service. Extra-curricular activities include a strong Catholic Identity. Blessings are given to presenters or speakers during Science club, and our

sports teams pray before and after they play. The SLEs enable the staff at HSCS to focus the student with discipline and expected behaviors.

HSCS is now using the MAP testing to help define and track the academic progress of students. This testing will be done three times a year, and will provide comparisons within our classes, community, and nationally to better see students' academic progress and achievement. The tests also allow for the measurement of each student's growth through the year. Because pre and primary grades are more summative, they will not participate in the MAP testing. Acceptable progress is also determined through weekly middle school faculty meetings, and meetings with the teachers and administration in the primary grades. Again, the small class sizes at HSCS are a bonus that allows for more individualized assessments of student progress.

HSCS is committed and dedicated to the children we serve by following the Catholic teachings of our diocese and the GTCC. We also adhere to state standards which are based on sound research and guidance. These guidelines and the flexibility to adapt the Common Core meet the needs and goals of improving student learning.

### **Significant Accomplishments:**

- Differentiated instruction and assessments to meet the student's needs and learning styles
- Small classroom size that allows for individualized teaching and one-on-one assistance
- SLEs that define the school's mission and aid our staff and parents in discipline and academic expectations

### **Goals:**

- Increase technology/teacher training to enable the teachers to tailor learning to each student's needs
- Develop SLE rubrics
- Implement MAP testing to evaluate student progress
- Utilize the new media center and science lab to increase knowledge and expertise in those areas
- Integrate the new religion standards
- Development of new SLE rubrics
- Differentiating instruction to challenge all learners
- Differentiated instruction will be determined by ...
  - Teacher formative assessments
  - MAP test scores in each goal area
  - LEA test results
  - Teachers will determine method of instruction that will best meet the needs of their students

**Evidence:**

- Golden Triangle Cooperative Consortium curriculum standards
- MAP testing results
- Report cards and use of School Speak in disseminating information to the parents
- Mass schedule
- New Montana Catholic Schools religion standards

## F. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

*The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning.*

Holy Spirit Catholic School (HSCS) has established and maintained a tradition of high student achievement and academic success. The curriculum from the Golden Triangle Cooperative (GTCC) is research based, challenging, comprehensive and relevant for each student. With the Common Core standards – already integrate into the GTCC standards – we were able to adapt student needs and curriculum needs to the Common Core standards without sacrificing our Catholic Identity and beliefs. The goal of high achievement is supported through solid research-based instruction, a variety of instructional methodologies and assessment and integration of Catholic values in all subjects.

The success of our school is dependent on the excellent teachers at HSCS. Fourteen educators in the K-8 program have a combined educational experience of 511 years and a combined education experience at Holy Spirit Catholic School of 131 years. Three of our educators hold Master's degrees while the majority of the others hold a Bachelors of Art degree.

Holy Spirit Catholic School's religion curriculum is chosen by our school pastor, Father Schlosser, and is USCCB-approved. This spring, the Montana Catholic Schools adopted new religion standards for every school. The educators are in the process of taking religious education classes at Marian University to become fully certified in religious education. This is a five year curriculum and the staff who have been here since the implementation, has currently completed the third year of training. Father Dick Schlosser comes in each year for staff in-services to discuss areas that he feels we need to focus on during the school year.

HSCS is a parish school with a strong Catholic Identity that is evident at the school and in the parish. We have a strong presence in the parish with monthly Sunday school masses at the parish where our school choir sings. Staff, alumni, students and/or family members of HSCS students are Eucharistic ministers and the HSCS students are altar servers, cross bearers, greeters and gift presenters. The parish bulletin includes a school section and a monthly insert highlights the school. Father Schlosser and newly assigned Father Wilkins have a strong presence at the school, and often on Fridays after Mass the priest visits the class that put on the Mass. The priests are also present at school games, dances, and special events. We are blessed that the new associate Pastor is showing the same dedication to the school and students that Father Schlosser always has. Catholic Identity and Catholic values are modeled by our staff and administration through daily prayer, presence and participation and service during mass, leading assemblies with prayer, Christian stewardship activities and service projects. Staff leads by example in their Catholic faith by participating in Cum Christo and in their own stewardship. Our religious curriculum follows the teachings of the Universal Church.

The Student Learning Expectations (SLEs) are used throughout the school to help guide the students not only in their Catholic faith but also in learning behavioral expectations. There are

posters placed in each classroom and in the hallways that display the SLEs. It is the goal of Holy Spirit Catholic School to practice these in all that we do. We are in the process of developing an SLE assessment.

Currently our educators use both formative and summative assessments in the classrooms. Assessments are frequent and varied and are integrated into the teaching and learning process. HSCS has recently adopted the MAP testing for summative assessments and will conduct two testing sessions this year which will enable our staff to look at progressive growth in learning for each student. We will also be able to assess how our students compare nationally and state wide and will be able to look at grade level norms. Other summative assessments include teacher-created tests and quizzes, standards-based textbook assessments and grade level mastery tests.

The HSCS principal is dedicated, clearly visible in the building and is accessible to staff and families alike. Frequently he is visiting classrooms, greeting children and parents in the hallways in the morning and after school, eating lunch with the children and following up with concerns as needed. There is a formal and informal evaluation process for all educators, as well as a peer evaluation. This is done on a rotating basis. New teachers to the school have all three evaluations done for the first three years. There are weekly Middle school meetings with the principal and educators to address teachers' concerns and student progress. Lesson plans are turned in weekly and there is a Tuesday morning meeting to discuss happenings at the school. HSCS follows the OPI recertification requirements for our teachers. There is limited funding for continuing education, however most HSCS staff do this at their own expense. Some training is also offered through the Golden Triangle Cooperative. Currently HSCS is paying for the staff religious education offered through Marian University.

At the start of each year, the GTCC offers in-services to discuss curriculum. HSCS has adopted a new math curriculum for grades K – 8<sup>th</sup> grade, a new handwriting curriculum for Kindergarten, and we utilize the Common Core to best meet the needs of the school and students. The committees that develop the GTCC curriculum meet three times a year. HSCS membership into the GTCC:

- Provides our teachers with a biannual professional development workshop.
- Provides administrators with insights into staff development.
- Gives teachers the opportunity to serve on curriculum committees. (Teachers are encouraged and provided class time off to participate.)
- Provides teachers the opportunity to attend summer workshops at a reduced fee or free.
- Staff members earn CEU for participating in GTCC activities.

We are particularly proud of our new Library and our new Science Lab which were made possible through the E. L. Wiegand grant. These spaces will enable students to expand their education through reading and through science. Also as part of the grant each student and teacher in each classroom has a dedicated iPad. There are document cameras and interactive boards in each classroom that can be used with the iPads as well. This will enable the educators to differentiate learning for every student or groups of students and will be another formative and summative assessment tool.

A strong respect for self and others at HSCS is evidenced through listening to students pray, discussing life events and interacting socially in the classroom. Each older student is matched with a younger “prayer partner”. Prayer Partners pray together, enjoy activities and do service projects together. One response from an educator at HSCS really exemplifies our identity, “The wonderful thing about teaching in a Catholic school is that we are allowed to address issues that arise in every subject from a Christian point of view.” Examples that she gave were anti-bullying lessons with “we are all of the Holy Spirit, whatever you do to the least of my brothers you do to me.” We all grow in our faith as we learn together.

### **Significant Accomplishments:**

- Adoption of Golden Triangle curriculum
- iPads for all students and teachers, document cameras, interactive boards and a new media and science center
- New math curriculum for K - 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- New handwriting curriculum for Kindergarten.
- Experienced and dedicated faculty
- Time set aside for curricular development
- Development of SLEs
- Prayer partner program
- New library and science lab
- Integration of technology
- Implementation of Teacher Evaluation system

### **Goals:**

- Continued technology training for faculty
- MAPS testing to determine student’s ability, to differentiate instruction, and identify curriculum needs
- Integration of new state-wide religion standards

### **Evidence:**

- Service projects
- SLE reflections
- MAP testing
- Teacher testing
- Teacher evaluation protocol (found in Montana Catholic Schools policy manual)

## **G. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT SPIRITUAL, PERSONAL, AND ACADEMIC GROWTH**

*Within the school's community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

As part of the Holy Spirit Catholic School faith community, we provide quality education which celebrates our Catholic faith and embraces the key principles of Catholic social teaching. The Mission Statement and Schoolwide Learning Expectations reinforce the school's purpose and goals, which promote and affirm a united commitment to educational excellence. Students participate in a variety of activities that support spiritual, personal, and academic growth. These activities include daily religion classes, daily prayer, weekly assemblies and liturgy services, as well as opportunities to participate in sacraments coupled with the spirit of service suffused into many of their activities throughout the year. Regular food drives and coat drives provide for the needy. During Lent, students and staff members collect and donate money to charities throughout Great Falls. Service to and for others is incorporated through Prayer Partner activities. For example, each year the fifth grade students serve at the first grade Thanksgiving Feast, busing tables and refilling drinks for both students and parents. With appropriate training, students fifth grade and older can be altar servers at weekly Mass. Each Mass is prepared and led by students. This rotates by grade so that all students participate at different levels, whether through greeting, reading, sharing petitions, bringing up the Gifts or carrying the cross.

Other student opportunities and support systems exist as well. The Holy Spirit Titans engage in a variety of sports, including cross country, basketball, volleyball, football, and track. The programs and coaches focus overall on a spirit of teamwork and cooperation rather than competition. A Science Club has provided students with the opportunity to experience dissection, bird tagging, and building models of the various human organs. A popular Wednesday morning offering for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade is Junior Toastmasters, which helps the students hone their speaking skills. The Grammar Academy is another before-school elective for 8<sup>th</sup> graders that meets on Monday mornings to provide students with additional practice on aspects of advanced English grammar and sentence diagramming. Student Council, Band, choir, music appreciation, and art programs are excellent, with the Christmas and Spring Programs often highlighting an important message of love and kindness. Under the guidance of our superb art teacher, Holy Spirit students develop and create wonderful works of art that are displayed throughout the building and in the community, often winning ribbons at the State Fair.

The parents and volunteers are indispensable assets. We would not be able to function without their aid and support, which moves well beyond the purely financial. Parents serve on the accreditation committees, on the School Advisory Board, Home and School organization which spearheads several fundraisers and community building activities, and Booster Club. Parents help with the yearly eye screenings and sports physicals, the school-picture sessions, the Book Fairs, and the Christmas Santa Store. They lead Girl and Boy Scout meetings, coach our sports teams and referee at games. They chaperone fieldtrips and dances, and organize class projects and parties. When they have a child participating in sports, they set up, clean up, run concession,

the admission gate, run the clock and keep the book. They attend Masses and are pivotal in guiding students' faith-formation. They also support the Parish's 'Family Promise Program,' a facility next to our school where eligible homeless families are able to stay for a week at a time.

Academically, there is support for students at many levels of achievement. A reading specialist works with children every day. A counselor works with students once a week on a case-by-case basis; teachers or parents can make a request for a child to work with him. He also meets with fifth grade students in groups of four to work on understanding choices and consequences. Holy Spirit has one foster grandparent, a former teacher who donates her time to work with struggling students on a one-on-one basis. The teaching staff recognizes the need to develop and put in place more standard supports to challenge high-achieving students and to meet the needs of low achieving students.

Some federal funding programs are utilized at Holy Spirit Catholic School. Title I provides some funds for the Reading Specialist, who works with struggling students and provides testing to determine student levels and progress. Title II allocates some money for professional development. However, the amount has been drastically cut this year. Holy Spirit used to receive \$2000 a year which now has been reduced to \$250. Finally, there are approximately thirty students who are able to utilize the subsidized lunch program.

A recently awarded grant through the E.L. Wiegand foundation has provided students with some of the most up-to-date technology available. Each student has access to an iPad which is theirs to use, with supervision, throughout the day. These are used in a variety of ways, including enabling students to have access to their homework online and providing teachers another avenue to allow for differentiation for our students. An interactive short throw projector as well as Apple TV allow for sharing between teachers' computers and student iPad content. Along with classroom technology, the computer lab is available to each class and is utilized to teach computer skills and keyboarding.

To promote on-going wellness and safety throughout the school, Holy Spirit has in place effective and practiced emergency procedures. School enrollment records are kept up-to-date in the office, with information in regard to allergies, immunizations, and other personal information. Emergency medical information is communicated to each teacher and is also kept in the office. Staff keep emergency medical binders with all relative information in their classrooms at all times. Escape routes are posted throughout the building. We routinely have practice lockdowns, fire drills, and shelters-in-place. After each practice drill, we discuss at staff meetings any possible changes or improvements. Employees are trained in CPR and in all our emergency procedures. Allergy sheets are maintained, updated each year, and provided to the staff. Holy Spirit also has a general peanut free policy in the classrooms and in the kitchen. Though we do not employ a nurse at the school, our office secretaries provide welcome and nurturing medical care at the office. Ice packs, band aids, inhalers, and parent-approved medication are given out to students who need them. Finally, Holy Spirit is included in the Great Falls police communication, which keeps the school informed of any threats in the surrounding area.

Overall, Holy Spirit Catholic School's support system for student spiritual, personal, and academic growth are fully rooted in Catholic teachings, particularly the principles of social justice and the dignity of the human person.

**Significant Accomplishments:**

- Staff and student involvement in liturgical and service activities
- A variety of extracurricular programs available
- Supportive parent involvement
- Ready access to current technology
- Practiced emergency procedures
- Strong music and art programs
- Co-curricular and Extracurricular programs:

Band	Student Council	Football
Choir	Toastmasters	Basketball
Science Club	Grammar Club	Volleyball
		Track

**Goals:**

- Develop standard supports for challenging high-achieving students.
- Institute a wider variety of resources for aiding and assessing low-achieving students this needs to be integrated into your narrative.

**Evidence:**

- Yearly Mass schedule
- Contributions to Great Falls' charities
- Weekly Monday morning assemblies
- Sports' practice and game schedules
- Rosters of participating students and adult leaders for Toastmasters, Science Club, Grammar Academy, and Student Council
- List of parent volunteers located in the office
- Holy Spirit School Advisory Board minutes
- Home and School notes
- Booster Club notes
- Technology in the classrooms
- Emergency medical binders in every classroom
- Art on display throughout the building
- The Christmas, Spring, and Select Choir programs every year

## H. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

*The pastor, principal, and school board develop, implement, and monitor resources and plans to ensure and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

Holy Spirit Catholic School's bookkeeping and accounting procedures are approved by the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings (Diocese) and Holy Spirit Catholic Church (Parish). QuickBooks software is used to keep the accounting records. Holy Spirit Catholic School (School) utilizes a qualified outside firm, Professional Accounts Receivable Management, to collect tuition payments. The Development Department uses several different software programs. Gift Works software tracks donations and School Auction is a specialized software used for tracking and monitoring items donated for school auction fundraisers. HSCS uses the internet based SMS platform to track the lunch program sales and to reconcile outstanding student charges.

The school's fiscal year is July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. The school contracts with a bookkeeper who compiles comprehensive financial reports for the finance committee. The Finance Committee consists of seven members; currently it is made up of an accountant, investment banker, business owner, parish manager, school principal, school development director, and school pastor. The information is then provided to the School Advisory Board, the Parish and the Diocese. Audits are completed under the direction of the Diocese.

Budgeting is a central component to the school's financial monitoring process. Each school department submits an annual budget to the principal which is then presented to the Finance Committee for review and approval. The Pastor provides the final approval of the budget. The budget is generally not revised. Budgeted amounts are compared to actual income and expenses on a monthly basis. Holy Spirit is a "cost-based, needs-based" program and assistance is available to families who cannot meet the minimum rates. The actual cost to educate a student guides tuition levels, establishes discounts and helps allocate financial aid. The school identifies and tallies actual costs associated with operating the school and its programs and divides that by the number of students to produce a working figure of the total cost of education. There are three different tuition levels (Holy Spirit Parish members, other local parish members, and Non-Catholic members) based on subsidies provided. Parents are asked to prayerfully discern the amount of tuition they can pay and to establish that amount as their tuition payment for the year. Those families needing tuition assistance are encouraged to apply for scholarships.

Planning ensures that resources (human, instructional, physical, and financial) are sufficient to sustain school programs, carry out the school's purpose, and support student achievement of the School-wide Learning Expectations (SLEs). Critical to ensuring that resources are sufficient to carry out the school's mission is maintaining full enrollment. The pastor, school administration, School Advisory Board, and Finance Committee, recognize that the parish's ministry of Catholic education must be sustained at an excellent level to attract and retain faculty and students to Holy

Spirit Catholic School. A future goal is to increase the teacher salary and benefit packages to be more competitive in the local market.

The school has developed plans to address budget deficits if needed. A percentage of expenditures are discretionary in the event of budget deficits. A reserve savings account has funds available to cover about 10% of the actual budget. These funds are used to offset any emergency or unexpected expenses. Reliable professionals are currently on retainer for maintenance work, as needed. The school has insurance through the Diocese. Registration fees are set aside for use in the year following collection.

The school budgets for technology expenses and annual technology upgrades are done by qualified technicians. The school was successful in securing a large technology and education resource grant. Grant funds totaling \$75,000 are currently being spent on an upgrade to the library and creation of a science laboratory. Additional grant funds and matching donations totaling \$150,000 are being used to implement state of the art classroom technology. The overage in the matching grant funds raised has been placed in a special account to help fund the technology needs of the future.

The school has an outside Endowment Trust that was formed in 1991. It is overseen by an independent board of trustees. The board members typically serve two three-year terms on the board. New board members are approved by the Pastor. As of December 31, 2013, the endowment had total assets of \$807,606.48. The breakdown of the current endowment funds are:

- \$96,677.47 – Endowment savings account at Diocese of Great Falls-Billings
- \$500,000 – Loan to Holy Spirit Catholic Parish for the building of new church
- \$210,929.01 – Brokerage account at D.A. Davidson & Co.

Each year the endowment's board of trustees determines how much of the endowment earnings are to be paid out to the school. For school year 2013-2014, the endowment board distributed \$20,000 to the school from the endowment. Some of those annual funds have specific usage restrictions on them, but the majority of the funds are unrestricted.

In addition to the endowment balances, the board of trustees also oversees a fund that was set up in the name of Msgr. Gluszek to provide scholarship opportunities to Holy Spirit Catholic School students. As of December 31, 2013, the Msgr. Gluszek Fund had a balance of \$161,345.43. For school year 2013-2014, the endowment board distributed \$10,000 to the School from the Msgr. Gluszek Fund.

There are also funds that people have given to the Catholic Foundation of Eastern Montana (Foundation) for the benefit of Holy Spirit Catholic School. As of December 31, 2013, the balance at the Foundation to benefit the school was [\$41,000]. For the school year 2013-2014, the Foundation distributed [\$1,700] to the school. The Foundation also administers the Winn

Scholarship which the school receives on an annual basis. The school also receives additional resources in varying degrees from Msgr. Gergen Fund and ACE scholarships.

The School does not receive any funding from the Diocese. The Parish budget includes providing the School with \$185,000 annually, which is paid monthly directly to the school. The lunch program receives federal funding which also entitles access Title 1 program resources. This program gives the School access to a teacher who provides individualized reading and math support to students who need additional support.

There is a School Advisory Board which meets monthly. Meetings are always open to the school and the Parish community.

The Development Department prepared and implemented an Enrollment Management Plan for school year 2013-14. The Holy Spirit Catholic School Enrollment Management Plan's (Plan) vision was to "increase enrollment of new students while retaining existing students and families. At the same time it will promote the school's achievements to attract new families and supporters by enhancing the reputation of the school in Great Falls and the surrounding area." The plan incorporated specific marketing and recruitment goals outlined with action items to meet those goals along with a timeline for meeting those goals and action items throughout the school year.

All alumni are sent *The Spirit* newsletter as a means to communicate the happenings of the School and its community. Alumni were specifically targeted for E.L. Wiegand Grant, where letters and other communications were made to encourage alumni to help meet the match for the funds awarded with this grant. Alumni, Parish families, and corporate entities are encouraged to attend the annual fundraising Gala. The Gala has grown significantly each year and is now a major source of operating and capital funding. The event provides an opportunity to highlight the school to the community, and promote the environment of faith and outstanding academics. A long term goal of the Gala organizers is to increase attendance and support of all Catholic parishioners in the area.

### **Significant Accomplishments:**

- All children are allowed and afforded a faith based education through parish subsidies and scholarships
- Holy Spirit Catholic School is supported by the Parish, with no Diocesan funding
- Obtaining a grant and matching the funding for classroom technology and education resources (science lab and library)
- Gala event – markets the school, builds a strong faith community, increases funding for academic and physical plant needs
- Maintaining our enrollment at a consistent level from 2013-14 to the new year 2014-15

## **Goals:**

- Continue to increase enrollment to reach maximum
- Build emergency fund
- Continue to seek grants, matching funds, donors, and endowment growth
- Increase teacher salary and benefit packages to be more competitive in the local market
- Annual “State of the School” report and presentation

## **Evidence:**

- Strategic Plan
- Budgets
- Mission, Vision, Philosophy and Beliefs Statements
- School-wide Learning Expectations (SLEs)
- Enrollment data
- Salary growth chart
- Marketing Plan